

# MISCELLANEA

## *PLACOBDELLA PARASITICA*

Dr. Aitken Clark has presented to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine a large leech measuring, when fully expanded, about seven inches, which was found sucking human blood, in Para, Brazil.

The specimen proved to be *Placobdella parasitica* (Say) 1824. It is most commonly found attached to species of *Chelydra*, etc.

T. SOUTHWELL.

## A CASE OF EMPYEMA SIMULATING ABSCESS OF THE LIVER

The patient, a male aged thirty, Brazilian, who had resided in Amazonas for the past ten years, was admitted to hospital 29.12.21.

*History.*—Patient dates his present illness from an attack of dysentery six months ago. Symptoms began with pain in the right hypochondriac region, debility, fever every afternoon, profuse sweating, loss of weight and swelling of the abdomen.

*On admission.*—Patient very much emaciated; abdomen generally distended, but markedly so in the right hypochondriac and epigastric regions. The right hypochondrium is occupied by a swelling, resistant, somewhat resilient, dull on percussion, reaching almost to the level of the right anterior spine of the ilium and across the mid-line; the swelling bulges in the right flank. Dullness on percussion is complete as high as the right nipple in front, and almost to the inferior angle of the scapula posteriorly. No fluctuation is perceptible over the swelling, which moves slightly with respiration.

No cough; no sputum; dullness and faint breath sounds over the base of the right lung as high as the inferior angle of the scapula.

*Treatment and Progress.*—On 31.12.21 an exploratory puncture was made one inch below the right costal margin in the anterior axillary lines, in the most prominent and most tender part of the tumour. One-and-a-half litres of reddish brown pus were aspirated with great relief of symptoms. Although no amoebae were present, on the assumption that the condition was probably liver abscess, a

grain of Emetine was administered hypodermically, and repeated daily till 21.1.22. The evening temperature was normal for a week, but then rose again. Another litre of pus was aspirated, but again two days later the temperature rose. It was then considered advisable to operate. On 21.1.22 a needle was inserted one inch below the costal margin in the anterior axillary line and a small amount of pus aspirated with a syringe. Under chloroform anaesthesia an incision was made, four inches long, parallel to the costal margin, its centre being just below the insertion of the needle. When the incision was deepened it was seen that the needle penetrated the diaphragm, which bulged down below the level of the incision. The diaphragm was incised and two litres of pus were evacuated. A finger passed through the incision and upwards encountered a large empty space, with the lung collapsed towards the apex. Inferiorly the diaphragm, partly adherent to the upper surface of the liver, was found to bulge downwards, below the level of the skin incision, to a distance of about two inches. A drainage tube was inserted and the remainder of the incision closed. For a week a fair amount of pus was discharged, the patient being encouraged to do breathing exercises to expand the lung.

2.2.22. Discharge much diminished ; drain and stitches removed.

5.3.22. Patient left hospital ; practically no discharge ; feeling very well and weighing 20 kilos more than on admission.

15.3.22. Patient returned to report. In the interval he had been riding on horseback every day. Wound closed and patient feeling very fit.

R. M. BURNIE.

## THE GOLUBACSER FLY

' . . . There is, in Servia and the Banat, a minute fly,\* from whose destructive assaults on the cattle the inhabitants have suffered immense losses. A traveller, arriving at Golubacs, on the Danube, thus speaks of it :—

“ Near this place we found a range of caverns, famous for producing the poisonous fly, too well known in Servia and Hungary

\* *Simulium columbascense* Köll.

under the name of the Golubacser fly. These singular and venomous insects, somewhat resembling mosquitos, generally make their appearance during the first great heat of the summer, in such numbers as to appear like vast volumes of smoke. Their attacks are always directed against every description of quadruped, and so potent is the poison they communicate, that even an ox is unable to withstand its influence, for he always expires in less than two hours. This results, not so much from the virulence of the poison, as that every vulnerable part is simultaneously covered with these most destructive insects; when the wretched animals, frenzied with pain, rush wild through the fields till death puts a period to their sufferings, or they accelerate dissolution by plunging headlong into the rivers'' '\*

'The Romance of Natural History,' by P. H. Gosse, F.R.S., 2nd ed., 1861, p. 111. Compare these ANNALS, XVIII, No. 3, 1924, p. 323.

J. W. W. STEPHENS.

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\* Spence's *Travels in Circassia*, i, p. 59.